DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 041 395 EA 002 956

AUTHOR	Kearney, C. Philip
TITLE	The Politics of Educational Assessment in Michigan.
PUB DATE	5 Mar 70
NOTE	18p.; Paper presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, (Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 2-6, 1970)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.00
DESCRIPTORS	Cultural Disadvantagement, *Curriculum Evaluation, Decision Making, Educational Policy, *Evaluation, Negroes, Policy Formation, *Political Influences, Political Power, Social Factors, *State Departments of Education, *State Legislation

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to describe and analyze one instance of educational policy making at the State level. Specifically, the discussion focuses on the proposal, passage, and implementation of a legislatively mandated program for the Statewide assessment of education in Michigan. The analytical framework utilized in the analysis depicts the policy-making process as taking place along a continuum wherein societal forces gradually merge into formal or informal activities and movements, which in turn lead to political action, and finally to formal enactment. Utilizing such a framework, the paper investigates (1) the socioeconomic, intellectual, and political forces behind the assessment movement; (2) the subsequent expression of individual and group values regarding the need for reliable performance indicators in education; (3) the resultant political activity generated by these individual and group expressions; and (4) the passage and eventual implementation of the program. (Author)

ED041395

THE POLITICS OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT IN MICHIGAN

C. Philip Kearney

Michigan Department of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Introduction

> The damage has already been done this time, but we hope someone does a little more checking the next time before the State Department of Education is allowed to pull another stunt like the one foisted on thousands of public school pupils this week.[1]

In such fashion, did one of Michigan's local newspapers view the implementation of the first phase of a program which has received everything from high praise to outright censure. For some it was seen as, ". . . a giant first step toward finding out where we are, so we can effectively determine where we will go."[2] Others described it as ". . . rotten, just out-and-out Communist propaganda--rotten all the way through."[3] Still others saw it as constituting an invasion of privacy.[4]

I refer of course to the beginning phase of the Michigan Assessment of Education--a pioneering effort in Michigan to lend more rationality to the process of educational decision-making at the state level.

---

[1]"Slanted Pupil Tests--Who Checked, OK'd Them?" (Ypsilanti Press, January 23, 1970), p. 4.

[2]John W. Porter, in a press release from the Michigan Department of Education, February 2, 1970.

[3]Roy Smith, quoted in Ypsilanti Press, loc. sit.

[4]See, for example, "Two School Districts Ban Questions" (Mt. Clemens-Macomb Daily), p. 1.

(Presented to the AERA Annual Meeting, March 5, 1970 in Minneapolis, Minn.)

EA 002 956

The purpose of this paper is to describe certain of the activities which surrounded, and perhaps influenced, one instance of educational policy making at the state level. Three subsequent papers in this symposium will deal respectively with: (1) the purposes of the program, (2) the analysis and reporting of data, and (3) the future and potential of state-wide assessment efforts.

There are several serious limitations in the present paper. First, the writer was--and continues to be involved deeply in the many activities surrounding this effort. In no way can he be viewed as an impartial and objective observer of the events in question. The problem of personal bias, as well as the problem of paying heed to convention and good taste, seriously mitigate against a clearly objective stance. More importantly, the writer undoubtedly suffers from what Gottschalk would term "egocentrism"--namely, the tendency of even a modest observer to recount what he himself heard and what he himself did as if those were the most important things said and done.[1]

Second, the paper--at best--represents an overview or a "broad brush-stroke" attempt to identify and describe certain of the key activities surrounding the development and implementation of this new policy. No claim can be made that the paper represents the results of a rigorous case study of the political process. Most of the documentary evidence available did come, at one time or another, within the purview of the writer and was examined by him. However, no systematic attempt was made to interview all the key actors in the process and, as Bailey has pointed out, live sources should be used in a study of policy making for "...what is committed to

---

[1]See Louis Gottschalk, Understanding History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 148-160.

writing represents only the seventh of the iceberg above water."[1]

In attempting to describe some of the important events surrounding this instance of policy making, the paper will first discuss briefly some of the societal and intellectual forces that may have helped set the stage for the assessment effort. Second, the paper will explore the political action phase of the effort by describing, in this writer's view, certain key events in that area. Third, the paper will deal with a number of events that occured subsequent to the formal passage of the legislation and which hold promise of exerting considerable influence on the future shape and direction of the program.

Societal and Intellectual Forces

Societal Forces

To attempt to identify and describe the entire gamut of social and economic forces that were--and still are--operating in the State of Michigan, and which influenced the development and implementation of the assessment program is beyond the scope of this paper. Such forces are pervasive and complex and, of course, do not operate necessarily within the confines of a single state. Neither do they exist in isolation, but rather in a complicated societal network of interrelationships with other forces and pressures. The American ideal of universal education, itself a product of a complex network of ideologies and values, has given rise to ever-increasing percentages of children in attendance at school. This has resulted--in Michigan as in most other states--in a grave concern for the

---

[1] Stephen K. Bailey, Congress Makes a Law (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. x.

problems of adequately meeting the educational needs of a vast body of young citizens. Urbanization, particularly the growth of the big cities, has produced added educational problems. The migration--over the past several years--of thousands of blacks from the South to the cities of the North, including Detroit, Flint, Lansing, Grand Rapids and others; the resultant increase in the populations of these cities; the "sudden" appearance of great numbers of people identified as "culturally deprived"--these are but some of the social pressures at work. These pressures have placed a phenomenal strain on the schools and, in turn, the revenue sources of the state.

In this writer's view, the one single force which may have created the greatest immediate demand and readiness for some type of assessment effort was essentially an economic force--namely, the combined and insistent voices of taxpayers continually asking, "What are we getting for our money?" Instructional inputs were increasing, costs of education were climbing dramatically, and property taxes were becoming more and more burdensome. Schoolmen--both at the local and state level--were able to offer little consolation to troubled citizens and state legislators who, when asked constantly for more funds for the schools, questioned the effect that added dollars had upon the educational performance of children. There was being expressed a rising demand for performance indicators in the field of education. Legislators and the general public were becoming increasingly insistent that there be made available some measure of the productivity of schools systems.

The Intellectual Forces

The major intellectual force behind this program must be attributed,

at least indirectly, to men like Coleman, Benson, Thomas, Burkhead, and a host of others who, generally utilizing an "input-process-output" research model, have investigated the question: "What are the correlates of educational success?"[1]

At the risk of being openly accused of egocentrism--if not just plain egoism--this writer will advance the proposition that the immediate intellectual force behind the current Michigan assessment effort was provided by staff members in the Department's Bureau of Research. The Bureau, which by June of 1968 had become an organization existing only on paper, was re-established in July of that year and staffed with a small group of men who not only had become familiar with, but also were intrigued by the research and writings of such men as Benson, Burkhead, Fox, Holland, Coleman, Thomas, Levin, Bowles, and others.

In late 1968, perhaps searching for a major issue to explore, they began to discuss informally the lack of reliable information concerning the progress of education in Michigan. These discussions led to the development of a paper which outlined the problem as they saw it and suggested, in rather inchoate form, that the Department ought to undertake a state-wide assessment effort. Because of their perception that such an idea would be viewed by many as highly controversial if not downright radical, they circulated the paper to only two persons outside the Bureau of Research--Ira Polley, then the State Superinendent of Public Instruction, and to one of his top-level assistants. It was at this point in the chronology of events that activities began to move into the sphere of politics--or, as some would have it, the political action phase was underway. (And here

---

[1] For a brief summary of this work, see: Thomas P. Wilbur, "Research into the Correlates of School Performance: A Review and Summary of Literature" (Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Department of Education, Research Monograph No. 1, 1970).

Bailey's definition of political action may be useful: "the fashioning of coalitions of influence in an attempt to determine what values are authoritatively implemented by government."[1])

Political Activities

Preliminary Considerations

Polley's reaction to the paper was very positive and immediately he began discussing possible strategies for implementing the idea of a state-wide assessment program. It was recognized that, while the State Board did indeed have power to mandate such a program, the program also would require a relatively high level of funding--and the only source for such funds was the Legislature. Two possibilities existed: (1) seek the introduction of a new price of legislation which would not only mandate the program but also provide the necessary funds; or (2) establish the program and acquire the funds through the simple expedient of having a line item added to the Department's annual budget for operations. Both alternatives, of course, would require legislative approval, but the latter had the advantage of not treating the program as an entirely new and separate issue. It was here that things stood as of January 14, 1970.

The State Board Intervenes

At this point, the State Board of Education entered the picture by

---

[1]Stephen K. Bailey et al, Schoolmen and Politics: A Study of State Aid in Education in the Northeast (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962) p. vii.

raising again the issue of whether the Department ought to assume the accreditation function then being fulfilled by the University of Michigan.[1] At its meeting of January 15, 1969, the Board had discussed, at some length, the accreditation process.[2] Although the Board expressed concerns over the apparent lack of any demonstrable relationship between accreditation and achievement, there still appeared to be strong feeling among some members that the Department ought to assume the function. At this juncture, Polley--who in his capacity as Superintendent also served as Chairman of the Board--stated that there would be prepared for the Board's consideration at its next meeting a report which would "examine measures to encourage the further development of quality education in the state."[3]

Polley's statement reflected the feelings of certain key staff members that there was little useful purpose in having the Department assume the accreditation function--at least as it was then being carried out. The introduction of the assessment idea was viewed as a more viable alternative, particularly in terms of the Board's expressed concern over the lack of visible evidence of improvement in achievement levels as a result of accreditation programs. And, of course, Polley knew that there was available the aforementioned Bureau of Research paper on assessment; and preliminary discussions regarding the idea already had taken place.

---

[1] In Michigan, the State Department of Education has never been involved in the accreditation of elementary or secondary schools. Accreditation of secondary schools is accomplished by the University of Michigan on a voluntary and extra-legal basis. In recent years, the issue of whether or not the Department of Education should assume this function has been brought before the Board repeatedly. As of January, 1970, the University of Michigan continues to fulfill this function.

[2] Minutes of the State Board of Education, January 15, 1969, Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan, pp. 171-172.

[3] Ibid.

In the two-week interim between the January 15 meeting and the next scheduled meeting of the Board, three important events took place. First, the Bureau of Research paper was revised and several copies were made. Second, the paper was then shared with several other staff members at the associate and assistant superintendent levels. This initial involvement of other key staff persons was the first step in building a consensus--if a somewhat shaky one at times--among staff members. It was deemed absolutely necessary to bring along all second level administrators in the Department, if the program were to have the slightest chance of success. If this consensus effort would not make all staff members total believers in what would certainly be considered by many as a controversial and radical program, it might at least ensure that they would not be active opponents and transmit such a posture to their own staff and to their clientle. Third, initial contacts were made with the executive heads of four politically powerful professional organizations--the Michigan Education Association, the Michigan Federation of Teachers, The Michigan Association of School Administrators, and the Michigan Association of School Boards. The purpose of these contacts was not to convince the groups of the "rightness" of the program, nor to have them take an official stand on the issue, but rather simply to inform them that such a proposal was going to be presented to the State Board of Education.

The first public articulation of the idea appeared then on January 28, 1969, in a memorandum from the Superintendent to the State Board.[1] The Board's response was to adopt a resolution favoring a program of state-wide

---

[1]Memorandum from Ira Polley, State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the State Board of Education (Michigan), January 28, 1969.

assessment, but also asking that the Superintendent and staff prepare ". . . preliminary details of a state-wide assessment plan. . .which can serve as a basis for preparing and submitting legislation. . .to further plan, develop, and implement the program."[1]

Thus, a second memorandum was prepared and forwarded to the Board on February 25, 1969.[2] This memorandum outlined the necessity for a three year planning and developmental cycle prior to the full implementation of the program and--once again--recommended that the Board give the go-ahead on preparing and submitting legislation. The Board responded by expressing a desire for a considerably shortened time period--" . . . a program tailored to respond within twelve months . . . ."[3]

A third memorandum was prepared and slated for Board review on March 25.[4] In its initial form, the March 25 memorandum held the line on the need for a three year planning and developmental period. However, it was not until April 23 that the Board took its next action. In the interim, one of the Board members had developed and was prepared to introduce a resolution which called for mounting a full-scale state testing program immediately. This proposal called for achievement testing at ". . . grades 3,6,9, and 12, . . . in the basic areas of reading, math, written and oral language skills."[5] In addition, all results of the testing program were

---

[1]Minutes of the State Board of Education, January 28, 1969, Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan, p. 195.

[2]Memorandum from Ira Polley...to the State Board...,February 25, 1969.

[3]Minutes of the State Board of Education, February 26, 1969, Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan, p. 223.

[4]Draft memorandum from Ira Polley. . . to the State Board . . . March 25, 1969 (in the files of the Bureau of Research).

[5]Minutes of the State Board of Education, April 23, 1969, Department of Education, Lansing, Michigan, p. 306.

to be made public information.

It was felt by departmental staff that this proposal was reflecting the views of other Board members--as well as many citizens--that what was being called for was an assessment effort designed to produce immediate results, as well as to offer the public comparative data on the schools. It was the view of certain key staff members that this proposal stood an excellent chance of being adopted by a Board desirous of obtaining some current and meaningful information within a relatively short period of time. Hence, a strategy of compromise was developed. The March 25, 1969 memorandum was revised and an "additional" effort was incorporated into the three year plan--namely, to administer a basic skills test to pupils at two grade levels during the 1969-70 school year taking "due cognizance of the conditions in which a school must operate."[1] This last phrase, of course, was intended to ensure that the program would be able to gather, analyze, and report not only performance or achievement data but also other pertinent data.

Following a series of discussions and amendments, the Board passed a resolution which directed the Superintendent to seek legislation that would provide a mandate and the funds necessary to undertake (1) a long-range planning and development effort, and (2) an immediate assessment of certain basic skills at one or more grade levels during 1969-70.

Action in the Legislative Arena

In seeking legislation, the decision was made to go the route of asking for a line item addition--along with the necessary language--in the Department's budget bill. The first overture, which was made to the Senate

---

[1]Memorandum from Ira Polley . . . to the State Board . . . March 25, 1969, revised April 22, 1969.

Appropriations Committee, met with no success.[1] A second attempt was made through the House Appropriations Committee and, after lengthy discussion and consistent urging by the State Superintendent, the program was eventually added to the bill.[2] Subsequently the bill was passed out of the House Education Committee with the assessment provision included. After passage by the House and subsequent passage by the Senate in late July 1969, the bill went to the Governor's desk for signature.

Because the idea of some type of state-wide assessment of evaluation appeared to have relatively high political currency,[3] and because it was known that the Governor would be including some type of assessment proposal in his educational reform package,[4] and because in Michigan the Governor has item veto power, department staff sat on tenter-hooks throughout the next two weeks. There was some thought that the Governor, while basically favoring the idea, might choose to veto that item and seek additional political mileage by introducing it as a fresh, new program arising from the work of his Commission on Educational Reform. These fears were unfounded, and on August 12, 1969, the Governor did sign the budget bill--with the assessment provision intact.

---

[1]Letter from Ira Polley, May 5, 1969

[2]Letter from Ira Polley, May 21, 1969

[3]During the legislative session in question, three other evaluation, assessment, or state-wide testing bills were introduced. One, which had been introduced annually for the past several years but which had never gotten out of committee, not only passed the Senate Education Committee but also passed the Senate and was in the House Education Committee during the time the Department was advancing its proposal.

[4]Private conversations with members of the Governor's staff.

The program's journey through the actual legislative process was fairly low-key, marked with no great fan-fare, and characterized by gentle persuasion rather than intensive lobbying. Staff felt that the idea would receive ready acceptance--as it did even in the Senate Appropriations Committee--but that the legislature might be extremely reluctant to provide a quarter-million dollars to fund the program. It came, then, as somewhat of a surprise to see that program emerge from the legislative labryrinth essentially intact.

Subsequent Events

The events and activities that may prove to have the most telling influence on the future shape and direction of state assessment policy occured not in the stages prior to or during legislative passage, but rather during the implementation phase of the basic skills assessment program.

While undoubtedly there are many factors that are having a direct or indirect influence on the future configuration of the program, three events or happenings seem particularly worthy of note: (1) the Governor's assessment proposal; (2) the reaction engendered by Section 1 of the assessment battery; and (3) the reaction engendered by two reading passages in the seventh grade battery.

The Governor's Proposal

As one of the main planks in his educational reform package, Michigan Governor William Milliken proposed a broad program of state-wide assessment and evaluation.[1] The Governor's proposal contemplates full length achievement batteries in reading and mathematics to be administered

[1]See Report of the Governor's Commission on Educational Reform (Lansing: September 30, 1960); and also Michigan, Senate, Special Session of 1969, S 1078.

to all children at certain selected grade levels.[1] There are, unfortunately, essential differences between the Governor's proposal and the current Department program. Yet is is too early to determine precisely what this might mean, since the proposal is still immersed in the labyrinth of the legislative process.

Reaction to Section 1 of the Basic Skills Battery

The major portion of the 1969-70 Basic Skills battery consists of shortened achievement tests in the areas of reading comprehension, vocabulary, English expression, and mathematics. The exception is Section 1--titled "General Information"--which contains 26 questions designed to provide the information necessary to construct indirect group measures of (1) socio-economic status, and (2) pupil attitudes and aspirations. Although individual pupils were asked to provide their names on the answer sheets, this was not for the purpose of analyzing or reporting individual results. Rather, it was seen as a means of providing comparisons of group test results from one year to another.

The entire battery was scheduled to be administered by all local districts during the last two weeks in January. However, in the case of Detroit, special arrangements had been made to begin the administration on January 12, 1970--one week earlier than the remainder of the State.

For some reason--which still remains unclear to this writer--there immediately arose agitation and opposition to Section 1 among the parents of two or three elementary schools located in the heart of Detroit's inner city. Charges were made against Section 1 on the basis that it was racist, uncalled for, and an unwarranted invasion of privacy. Parents threatened

---

[1]Michigan, Senate, Special Session of 1969, S 1078.

to boycott the schools if that Section were administered.[1] The NAACP entered the picture and lent its support to the parents.[2] Detroit officials, sensing the possibility of a serious confrontation, contacted the Department. Following a series of telephone conversations between Department staff and Detroit officials, it was decided that--rather than run the risk of seriously jeoparadizing the entire assessment effort--the first section of the battery would not be administered in those two or three schools.

At this point, the press entered the picture by giving the issue front-page coverage in a leading Detroit newspaper.[3] Following the appearance of this article, events rapidly accelerated. The newspaper story stated that Section 1 had been made optional in Detroit--leading, in turn, to two additional problems: (1) other schools in Detroit--who now had become sensitized to the issue--viewed this as "official permission" for each of them separately to decide whether or not the first section should be administered; and (2) because the newspaper account received wide circulation throughout the state, other districts became sensitized to the possibility of parental outcry; and in some cases, these districts took it upon themselves to delete that section of the battery.

Additionally, because of the controversial nature of the issue as well as its wide publicity, the problem quickly reached the State capitol and the floor of the Senate. Three legislators--one pro and two con--delivered statements which were entered in the Senate Journal.[4] The flavor of the debate

---

[1]William Grant, "Parents Protest School Test" (Detroit Free Press, January 16, 1970), p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Michigan Senate, Journal of Senate: No. 3, Regular Session of 1970, pp 38-40.

is perhaps best captured by quoting briefly from their remarks.

First Senator:

> ... tomorrow they [the Department of Education] are giving some kind of a phony exam. . . . Now when I say "phony", the first part does not deal with any type of educational substance which would give. . . any reason to feel or to find how the child is progressing. The first part deals with how many cars are there in your home, how many bathrooms do you have, does your mother have a washing machine and iron . . . and all of these foolish, phony questions.[1]

Second Senator:

> I think this thing is nuts. I don't think there is any great sense to it and I think maybe the Legislature could provide a lot better questions and why should we pay so much to have somebody design something like this that may be affront [sic] to the kid.[2]

Third Senator:

> The story that I get is first of all these tests are precisely the type of test that we have been asking for.... the test. . . is devised into two parts, the first attempts to determine the economic level of the child. . . . the questions about how many wash machines, how many dishwashers, etc. are merely designed to determine whether the child is at the poverty level or in a low income level or middle income level, etc. then to be able to relate economic circumstances to achievement. Up to now many of us have been contending . . . that there is a definite relationship between economic levels and achievement. This is an effort to make a direct connection with the second part of the test which has to do with measuring reading and arithmetic ability. Now it is very, very possible that the test could be improved; but I think the charge that the State Board is wasting money and has some ulterior motive in asking these questions is unfounded.[3]

Needless to say, newspapers throughout the state picked up the story and a hue and cry arose from many quarters--from individual parents, from school people, from groups, and from the Michigan Civil Liberties Union which considered asking for an injunction to halt the program. There is neither time nor space in this already lengthy paper to discuss the Department's

---

[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

reaction and the steps it took to combat the problem--including publicly releasing the first 26 questions. The furor did lessen and the program went on. (The extent of missing data in this area is still not precisely known.)

Reaction to the reading passages

While the concerns expressed over Section 1 of the battery engendered a host of problems--and perhaps have the most serious political implications for the future shape of the program--the furor [redacted] raised was nothing compared to the furor caused by two passages in the reading comprehension section of the seventh grade battery.

It was these two passages that raised the hue and cry of "communist propaganda" and labeled the program as "rotten all the way through."[1] It was these two passages that led to introductions of resolutions in both the Senate and the House calling for moratoriums on the program. It was these two passages that struck what apparently was a sensitive spot among certain groups and individuals in Michigan--and, in the process, sensitized the assessment staff to an additional political concern.

Of the passages in question, the first was an excerpt from an F. Scott Fitzgerald short story entitled "The Rich Boy."[2] The second passage has been taken--some twenty years ago--from a social studies textbook; it described the human problems arising from industrialization.[3]

The initial complaint came as a result of a telephone call from a Senator representing a district in the western part of the state. The

---

[1]See p. 1, above.

[2]Michigan Assessment of Basic Skills, Grade 7 (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1970), p. 15.

[3]Ibid., p. 16.

Senator indicated that he had been in touch with a local school superintendent and members of the school board who were threatening to boycott the entire battery because of the "insidious ideological thrust of the passages which were seen as a blatant attempt to inculcate anti-American and anti-free enterprise values in school children." The senator, within a matter of a few hours and with support from other Legislators, introduced a Senate resolution calling for a moratorium on all testing. A reading of the resolution's "whereas" clauses provide the gist of the argument:

> Whereas, the Michigan Assessment of Basic Skills Test is being administered to all fourth and seventh grade public students in the state of Michigan; and
> Whereas, the ideological thrust of several of the pages used, particularly on pages 15 and 16 to measure readership comprehension are anti-free enterprise and anti-industrial; now there be it resolved. . . .[1]

Nor was the House side of Michigan's legislative body idle. In remarks on the floor, a member introduced a new charge--racism--while also advancing the allegation that the battery contained an "anti-free enterprise" bias:

> There are some segments of. . . this [the battery] that . . . I object to most strenuously. . . I would read just a few lines to you, and then give my reason for the objection. It reads thus: "Let me tell you about the very rich. They are different from you and me. They possess and enjoy early. It does something to them. It makes them soft, where we are hard and cynical, where we are trustful." Let me remind these members that this state has enough division within its borders right now. . . . Let me replace a word here for you and see how it reads. "Let me tell you about the black, they are different from you and me. The white possess early. . . ." and so forth and so forth. I think that this is an absolutely atrocious thing to start indoctrinating into the seveth grade students. . . . There are not these differences; or if there are they will exist forever more. As long as you have a free enterprise system you are going to have rich, you are going to have moderate and you are going to have poor, regardless of how we try and how well intended our efforts are. But it is a cinch that some don't even know they are poor until we come along and

---

[1]Michigan, Senate, Journal of the Senate: No. 7, Regular Session of 1970, p. 83.

> tell them they are poor . . . . I think this is wrong . . . . It further divides our people, and to divide is to conquer.[1]

On the following day, this same legislator--with support from seven others--introduced a House resolution calling for a moratorium. The resolution's argument, in part, went as follows:

> . . . It is not the intent of the Legislature in its financial support of education in this state to underwrite propaganda that would further divide the people of this state; and
> . . . . . .
> In no way should education teach division in that there may be differences in people, whether it be race, color, creed, or financial position, where the end result of hate or misunderstanding would obviously develop; and
> . . . We are a nation of differences, a world melting-pot, but to educate that one difference over another is good or bad is not only wrong but un-American. . . .[2]

Fortunately for the program, the Department was able to work with legislators in both houses and provide the assurance necessary to halt both resolutions before they reached floor consideration.

A Final Observation

There were--and still are, of course--a host of other activities of a political nature surrounding this instance of policy formation. Many of these have had, or will have,direct or indirect influence on the future shape and direction of the program. This paper has touched only the surface in its description of the key events and activities that have taken place, and only from the vantage point of one actor in the process. If anything is readily apparent to this writer, it is that the process is intricately complex and one that does not necessarily end with the passage of legislation. In this instance at least, events, and activities subsequent to formal passage appear to be exerting a profound influence on shaping what eventually will become Michigan's posture toward state-wide assessment.

---

[1]Michigan House of Representatives, Journal of the House: No. 5, Regular Session of 1970, pp. 128-129.

[2]Ibid, No. 6, pp. 168-169.